

REPORT TO: Schools Forum

DATE: 16th October 2019

REPORTING OFFICER: Operational Director – Education, Inclusion and Provision

SUBJECT: Contingency/Staff Dismissals Update

WARDS: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To report on the level of School Contingency and staff dismissal budget and to update members on the approved requests to date.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

2.1 School Forum note the current commitments agreed from the contingency and staff dismissals.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Background

3.1 The Schools Contingency is the sum delegated to those schools maintained by the Local Authority. Halton schools have agreed that this sum is de-delegated and managed centrally. This total budget for 2019/2020 is £198,252. This funding can only be used in the following circumstances:

- Exceptional unforeseen costs which it would be unreasonable to expect governing bodies to meet;
- Schools in financial difficulties; and
- Additional costs relating to new, reorganised or closing schools.

3.2 Applications can be considered by the School Forum under the following circumstances:

- Schools in financial difficulty, unable to access a licence deficit, applying for a deficit write off;
- Formula errors and other miscellaneous costs which schools could not be expected to fund from their own budget;
- Additional costs relating to new, re-organised or closing schools (this could include the costs of any salary protection);

- Emergencies and exceptional unforeseen costs which it would be unreasonable to expect governing bodies to meet;
- Schools in special measures or where there are serious weaknesses;
- Result of former poor leadership and management for a school which is now under new leadership; and
- Significant loss of goods or equipment;
- Schools in financial difficulty that wish to apply for a licenced deficit;*

3.3 Applications from schools in financial difficulties applying for a licenced deficit are considered by the Strategic Director People and the Strategic Director - Enterprise, Community and Resources.

3.4 The procedure for applying for additional funding from the contingency is as follows:

- Schools must put a formal request for support in writing to the Operational Director – Education, Inclusion and Provision.
- Schools must state clearly how they have met the eligibility criteria;
- Schools must provide clear details (and financial values) of the circumstances underlying the application, the amount of contingency they are applying for and the rationale for the amount requested;
- Applications can be made at any time during the year;
- Requests will be considered and determined by a sub group of the School Forum. School Forum Sub Committee will have at least 3 members but no more than 5. The outcome of any decision will be reported to the next School Forum;
- The Headteacher of the school applying for funding will be asked to attend School Forum to explain their application and answer any queries.
- Schools will be notified of the outcome of the School Forum decision within 5 working days of the meeting.

3.5 There have been two approved applications for funding received to date. Two applications were considered in 2018/2019 but made a commitment for additional funding in 2019/2020. The funding agreed is detailed below:

| School | Funding |
|-----------------------|----------------|
| Ditton Primary School | £9,956 |
| Simms Cross | £19,575 |
| Total | £29,531 |

3.6 The remaining balance is £168,721.

3.7 The budget for staff dismissals is £127,110. There has been one application for support, for £105,304.02 from Woodside Primary School. This request was considered and approved by the School Forum Sub Committee. The balance remaining is £21,805.98.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The funding agreed by School Forum Sub Committee ensured that one of the schools was able to undertake a restructure and reduce its staff so that it could balance its budgets. The allocations for the other two schools were to support them to raise standards.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

5.1 Children & Young People in Halton

The contingency is used to provide financial support and stability to schools.

5.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

None.

5.3 A Healthy Halton

None.

5.4 A Safer Halton

None.

5.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None.

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

6.1 Without financial assistance schools would either be unable to balance their budget or be forced to make additional staffing reductions which will directly impact on pupil outcomes.

In the case of two of the schools the funding was needed to try and support and boost pupils performance.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

7.1 Applications are welcome from any eligible school and each application is considered on its own merit.

8.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

N/A